United Nations A/58/746

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 March 2004

Original: English

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda items 85 and 130

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Evaluation of the impact of the recent restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations

Note by the Secretary-General*

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, 54/244 of 23 December 1999 and 56/241 of 24 December 2001, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit for the attention of the Assembly the attached report, conveyed to him by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, on the evaluation of the impact of the recent restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

2. The Secretary-General takes note of the findings and concurs with the recommendations.

* The delay in submission was caused by the need, on the part both of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to attend to other unforeseen assignments.

04-28318 (E) 080404

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the impact of the recent restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations

Summary

At the request of the General Assembly, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) evaluated the impact of the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the backstopping of its field operations. OIOS found that the Department's strengthening is in midstream and it will need more time for its impact to be realized fully. Nevertheless, OIOS believes that the reform is on the right track. Additional staffing has allowed the Department to enhance its strategic, analytical and operational capacity and to improve its multifaceted support of field operations. Cooperation with stakeholders has become more consistent and comprehensive.

The Department has to review its restructuring experience, formalize its organizational structure and make its internal planning more realistic and commensurate with available resources. The reform objectives of promoting the delegation of authority to the field along with strengthening accountability should be fully attained. There remains considerable room for improvement in personnel management.

As the reform efforts come to fruition, the Department needs to address all aspects of the issue of transition, from the surge staffing level to the steady state in its various functions. It is in the process of creating a reliable mechanism of identifying best practices and institutionalizing them as established policies. The Department needs also to implement fully all envisaged objectives in information management and technology. OIOS hopes that its recommendations will be helpful for the Department to reach the reform goals.

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–2	4
II.	Building up strength	3–7	4
III.	Strategic and operational planning and guidance	8–27	5
	A. Integrated mission planning	9–12	5
	B. Political affairs	13–17	6
	C. Military	18–23	7
	D. Civilian police	24–27	8
IV.	Mission support services	28–39	9
	A. Logistics	30	10
	B. Financial management	31–32	10
	C. Personnel management	33–39	10
V.	Policy and capacity development	40–52	12
	A. Policy development	41–44	12
	B. Lessons learned and best practices	45–48	13
	C. Training	49–52	13
VI.	Information and communications technology	53–60	14
VII.	Organizational structure and function	61–64	16
VIII.	Management culture	65–70	17
IX.	Conclusions	71–72	18
X.	Recommendations	73–102	18

I. Introduction

1. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/241 of 24 December 2001, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) evaluated the impact of the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on its performance in the backstopping of peacekeeping operations. The evaluation included the examination of documents, questionnaires and interviews, both in New York and in the field. Other oversight studies and reviews were taken into account. This report was reviewed by the Department and its comments are reflected here.

2. The Department reform concept was first developed by the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. The framework of restructuring the Department and its goals in various areas was then outlined in reports of the Secretary-General. This vision was translated into action by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/238 of 23 December 2000 and reinforced in its resolution 56/241. OIOS recognizes that some reform measures require longer gestation periods to produce the desired impact than others. In such cases, OIOS assessed whether relevant measures are on the right track and implemented consistently.

II. Building up strength

3. The 93 additional posts provided by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/238 became available on 1 January 2001 and the 91 additional posts endorsed in resolution 56/241 came up for recruitment on 1 January 2002. The Office of Mission Support was the largest recipient of new posts — 102 of them, followed by the Military Division with 37 posts, the Office of Operations with 20 posts and the Civilian Police Division with 13 posts.

4. In relative terms, the highest increase was in the Civilian Police Division — from 11 to 24 posts, followed by the Military Division which grew by 80 per cent to 83 posts, and the Office of Operations — by 34 per cent to 78 posts. Within the Office of Mission Support, the biggest relative increase was in the Personnel Management and Support Service — by 62 per cent to 115 posts; followed by the Logistics Support Division, which grew by 43 per cent to 164 posts and by the Finance Management and Support Service, with an increase of 25 per cent to 70 posts.

5. The actual strengthening of the Department was building up gradually as the recruitment of the staff for the new posts progressed. OIOS took recruitment delays into consideration in assessing the Department's restructuring accomplishments. OIOS noted with satisfaction that field experience was considered an advantage in selecting candidates.

6. OIOS observed that more than 80 per cent of staff in the Military Division and the Civilian Police Division was serving on secondment from national Governments for tours of duty of three years on the average. This benefits the expertise and capacity of services seconding the officers and also ensures that the Department's military staff has recent peacekeeping experience and current knowledge of military structures and procedures. On the other hand, it entails extra efforts in training new arrivals and can cause lapses in institutional memory if handovers do not occur properly. The additional demands placed on the Civilian Police Division because of the growth and complexity of policing and rule of law components of peacekeeping

and the infancy of the Division as an entity separate from the Military Division accentuate the effect of difficulties faced because of the short tour of duty of seconded personnel.

7. One of the main justifications for about one third of the new posts was to manage peaks in the Department's workload related to the launching of new missions. Currently, this "surge staffing" is placed at Headquarters, while in some field missions relevant administrative and logistical detachments are not always adequately staffed. Given this, it could be more efficient to place a part of the surge staffing capacity in the field. OIOS noted that a considerable number of new posts was charged with developing guidelines, standard operating procedures and manuals in various functional areas. Such activity requires heavy initial work in producing the base documents. After that, workload diminishes and is limited to issuing revisions. OIOS believes that once the comprehensive body of policy publications is produced, the deployment of the posts that had prime responsibility in creating it should be reconsidered.

III. Strategic and operational planning and guidance

8. One core goal of restructuring was to strengthen the Department's strategic and operational planning in close cooperation with other parts of the Secretariat and external entities. It was envisaged for strategic planning to rely on a comprehensive assessment of the political, socio-economic, developmental, human rights and all other relevant factors that have contributed to the conflict concerned. Integrated mission task forces were to make the planning of new peacekeeping operations more inclusive and effective.

A. Integrated mission planning

9. OIOS found that earlier observation that the Executive Committee on Peace and Security is not living up to its full potential is still valid at least in regard to strategic analysis and planning, especially concerning its fostering the strategic interdepartmental/agency perspective as related to peacekeeping operations. The Executive Committee operates more as an information-sharing and consultation mechanism. Strategic decisions for specific situations are generally taken bilaterally at the senior management level. This situation makes the role of integrated mission task forces even more important. OIOS recalls that the Office of Operations was to play the critical role in sustaining integrated mission task forces.

10. However, the practical experience was different. Integrated mission task forces did not play a key role in strategic management of an operation, nor did it become the start-up team of a mission. Integrated mission task forces were not able to task the rest of the United Nations system. Integrated mission task forces did facilitate, however, coordination and information exchange and provided support for decision makers on issues pertinent to the specific operation. While proving that an integrated mission task force can hardly serve as a decision-making body, practice also highlighted its many useful facets and many issues in need of resolution. The need for a thorough reassessment of the concept with the view to making it practical and effective was apparent. While OIOS recognizes that strategic and operational planning is now considerably more structured than it had been in the past, it is

regrettable that the concept of integrated mission task forces has not been so far reassessed, adjusted and formalized to become operational.

11. The concept of integrated mission task forces mandated direct and continuous participation of the future head of mission and force commander. However, this was more an exception than the rule. OIOS believes that when such participation is difficult, provision should be made for senior representatives to sit in for the principals.

12. The Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit is now participating in the planning of new missions. However, it is not clear that the processes are in place to ensure that essential best practices are being absorbed and implemented.

B. Political affairs

13. OIOS observed that additional staffing enhanced the analytical capability of the Office of Operations. Compared with the situation before restructuring, when crisis management was modus operandi, more staff time is now devoted to conceptualizing and analytical reflection, often jointly with partners. The clear delineation of the relationship between the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has a positive impact on collaboration between them. The Department of Political Affairs guidance and support, provided through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, is an important resource for peacekeeping operations. The Department of Political Affairs' political affairs officers maintain a global watch and address situations through the whole continuum from conflict prevention to peace-building. As a result, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations benefits from the institutional knowledge of the Department of Political Affairs about particular conflicts and countries. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations also relies on Department of Political Affairs advice to ensure that the political direction provided to peacekeeping operations takes full account of all the dimensions of a conflict.

14. OIOS observed that the Department of Political Affairs occasionally outposts to the Department for the start-up phase of a new mission one political affairs officer responsible for the area. A longer-term secondment, as envisaged by the integrated mission task forces concept, could be even more useful. Such long-term loan by the Department of Political Affairs could be compensated by the assignment of a Department of Peacekeeping Operations political affairs officer to the Department of Political Affairs, a mobility scheme that could broaden professional expertise. Agreements between the two Departments on lead department responsibility for specific missions provide that the Department of Political Affairs will support the head of mission, through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with political advice through written notes on various subjects. This practice should be made more consistent to facilitate more effective use of the Department of Political Affairs expertise for backstopping peacekeeping missions.

15. Broad issues relevant to the implementation of a peacekeeping mandate frequently need to be addressed at the subregional level. Obstacles to doing it comprehensively include the different reporting lines and mandates of heads of political and peacekeeping missions there and impediments to sharing resources between missions. OIOS noted positive initiatives in West Africa, where practical measures were taken to strengthen coordination among the five United Nations

political and peacekeeping missions as well as with humanitarian and development agencies. OIOS is of the view that this worthy initiative should be expanded and intensified.

16. In terms of operational support, the OIOS survey indicated that turnaround time and receptiveness to the field's needs on the part of desk officers have improved significantly and that regular videoconferences between missions and Headquarters are very useful.

17. One of challenging but very important facets of operational management in the political area is assessing the performance of a mission's political component. OIOS observed that feedback provided from New York to the field in this regard varied widely in terms of consistency and periodicity. Remedial measures were rarely recommended.

C. Military

18. OIOS observed that the Department's restructuring had enhanced the strategic capacity of the Military Division by creating the Force Generation Service tasked with the mobilization, rotation and repatriation of military resources and focusing the Military Planning Service entirely on producing concepts and plans for the military component of peacekeeping operations. This clear delineation of responsibilities increased the backstopping effectiveness of each function. OIOS noted that the Military Division had conducted a number of self-evaluation reviews of the new structure and its core functions, resulting in further functional and organizational enhancements. In 2001 the Military Planning Service developed a handbook on planning processes for military operations, which is now being updated to reflect lessons learned since then.

19. OIOS noted that the Force Generation Service had achieved a more comprehensive availability planning of forces by preparing the handbook on stand-by arrangements, categorizing the stand-by pledges by their preparedness and had enhanced the quality of forces by conducting pre-deployment assessments and in-theatre visits. Deployment preparedness was strengthened by the creation of the structured military on-call list for generic mission headquarters and by conducting periodic training for the personnel on the list.

20. The strengthening of the Military Division also allowed for raising the scope and quality of military cooperation with Member States and fostering its regional dimension. OIOS found that the operational support by the Military Division to field forces was reliable and consistent. What now needs more attention, in OIOS view, is assessing the military preparedness and effectiveness of forces in the field. OIOS noted that the Department's recent evaluations of the military components in missions were useful.

21. Another important point requiring the attention of the Department is improving the quality and currency of primary guidance related to military components. Two of the most important mission documents: the Standards, Verification and Control of Contingent-Owned Equipment for Major Equipment and Self-Sustainment (COE Manual) and the Guidelines to Troop-Contributing Countries for Military Units (TCC Guidelines) require continuous attention. The TCC Guidelines need to be current and their specific provisions must be updated when the situation requires.

While the recent release of the TCC Guidelines for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) is a promising example, there should be an established procedure for revising the standing Guidelines. The COE Manual is the main instrument on the management of the reimbursement for contingent-owned equipment and contains the recommendations of the Working Groups, which have been endorsed and approved by the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly respectively. The Department is in the process of developing standard operating procedures to guide the missions on the practical application of policies for contingent-owned equipment. Experience has shown that the absence of such guidelines has resulted in different applications among missions.

22. OIOS found insufficient clarity regarding the alignment of the responsibilities and resources of the Situation Centre. The restructuring envisaged it as a repository and provider of factual information on peacekeeping operations, serving as a joint operations centre when required and being also responsible for coordinating the implementation of a knowledge management system for the Department. OIOS noted that the Centre's services were positively appraised by the diplomatic community. However, OIOS observed that, with its current resources, it was not reasonable to expect the Centre to provide substantive input into strategic analysis and planning and also to perform staff and operational functions at the same time. Nor was it obvious how the Centre, being a monitoring structure, would be reconfigured as a considerably more complex joint operations centre. It was not clear how the Centre's responsibilities in knowledge management (a staff function) and as a repository for information could be harmonized with its maintaining around-the-clock duty room. These and related issues require resolution to prevent unreasonable expectations regarding services that the Centre can realistically deliver, both currently and in the future.

23. OIOS observed rigidities inhibiting a manoeuvre of military assets between peacekeeping missions operating in the same subregion. Despite the close proximity of different forces, their commanders have insufficient leeway in assisting each other, conducting joint operations, and adopting coordinated strategies. While OIOS is cognizant of the difficulties involved, it is of the view that the prevailing insular approach to operations should give way to subregional consolidation of resources in order for the United Nations to obtain full value from its military assets. OIOS recognizes recent inter-mission flexibility developments as a move in the right direction.

D. Civilian police

24. The establishment of the Civilian Police Division and the more than doubling of its staffing provided the critical mass of expertise for selection, training and rapid deployment of civilian police personnel, strategic and operational planning and guidance and created the nucleus of capacity for advice on criminal law, judicial and penal matters. Cooperation with police-contributing countries has been strengthened, resulting in an improved quality of civilian police field personnel and a reduction in the repatriations of unqualified staff. The development of job profiles for the field helped to realign the civilian police corps away from a regime of generalists to one where police officers are chosen for their specialized skills and managerial experience. Currently, the Civilian Police Division is much better equipped for meeting the unique challenges of forming and managing the cadre of

international police personnel from a wide range of countries with different backgrounds, competencies and policing approaches. The response from the field received by OIOS indicates a significant improvement in the Civilian Police Division backstopping of the civilian police components of peacekeeping operations.

25. OIOS noted the recent streamlining of the Civilian Police Division structure, chain of command and functions, supported by the development of relevant standard operating procedures. OIOS trusts that these improvements will also address the situation within the Civilian Police Division sections. At the time of the OIOS evaluation, each of them had a pool of Professional staff members at the P-3 and P-4 levels without a formally selected and appointed head. Nominal officers-in-charge were sometimes at lower grade than their subordinates. The responsibilities of staff members were at times unclear and not in line with job descriptions. OIOS observed that, because the Civilian Police Division has the lowest ratio of General Service to Professional posts in the Department, the daily workload of desk officers contained many routine administrative tasks that should normally be performed by General Service staff.

26. OIOS observed that a number of implementation deadlines for outputs related to civilian police doctrine and standard operating procedures continue to be delayed. While the shortage of resources could have excused past delays, the implementation must speed up with the Civilian Police Division at full strength. The Civilian Police Division planning concept envisaged using business plans as the framework for periodic assessment of progress achieved in implementing the restructuring objectives. However, these periodic self-evaluations have not so far materialized. OIOS noted that the management of the Civilian Police Division was cognizant of those shortcomings and intended to correct them.

27. OIOS believes that, as a complex peacekeeping operation evolves into its exit phase, the role of the civilian police becomes more prominent. The issue at this phase is not only an orderly departure of the United Nations force, but a viable transitional policy, a sustainable legacy of professional policing and durable law and order structures. The attention of the civilian police should be focused on effective police reforms as a means of preventing future crises and on establishing mechanisms for the accountability of national police.

IV. Mission support services

28. The goal in this area was to develop an effective rapid-deployment capacity for personnel and materiel at the start-up of missions and to provide them with timely, cost-efficient and effective administrative and logistical support throughout their life cycle. OIOS observed noticeable improvements over the past two years in mission support services. Performance indicators are used to gauge administrative and logistics backstopping and mission support plans are used to detail requirements and timeframes of specific services. Daily contact with mission management is the norm. Weekly operational briefs, chief administrative officer reports and joint video conferences are used proactively to identify issues of concern.

29. However, regarding the overall Office of Mission Support backstopping of field operations, OIOS observed that while there was tangible improvement in attention and turnaround on straightforward operational issues, more complex

queries from the field were often stalled within the Office while the field received no feedback on how these issues were being handled and when they would be resolved.

A. Logistics

30. One of major reform accomplishments in support services was the establishment of the strategic deployment stocks. Operational engagement of strategic deployment stocks in the start-up phases of new missions has demonstrated the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of this restructuring innovation. However, several issues need to be addressed to ensure full strategic deployment stocks effectiveness. Their operational readiness hinges on the strategic deployment stocks replenishment strategy which, in turn, depends on policies and procedures that should have been promulgated in mid-2003 but were still being drafted at the time of the OIOS evaluation. The capacity to deploy assets of a complex mission is critical to the achievement of the objective of the strategic deployment stocks but the exact volume and structure of all resources required for that have not yet been assessed.

B. Financial management

31. While there were no structural changes in the area of financial management, the staffing increase was to strengthen such priority areas as claims management, liquidation process, coordination and the development of policy guidelines. In 2002, a new policy for the administration of allotments for peacekeeping missions expanded their authority over budgetary controls. OIOS observed that while benefiting the missions, the new policy also helped the Department to focus on providing them with the necessary tools for better financial management and accounting practices. However, the new policy did not apply to missions funded under the regular budget. These missions still rely on the Department for all decisions relating to the redeployment of funds. OIOS believes that expanding the new policy to them would result in greater efficiency.

32. OIOS observed significant improvements in claims processing: backlogs of outstanding claims have been eliminated and nearly 80 per cent of contingent-owned equipment claims are processed within 30 days of receiving the related verification reports. OIOS noted consistently positive feedback from troop-contributing countries regarding reimbursements to them. The process of concluding memorandums of understanding with troop-contributing countries has also become more expeditious. OIOS noted in particular the positive impact of additional staffing on the efficiency of the liquidation process: of the 13 closed missions that were pending liquidation at the start of 2002, 11 had been fully liquidated by mid-2003. The improved coordination with the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts has reduced redundancies and strengthened mission budgetary controls.

C. Personnel management

33. The Secretary-General has stressed that all reform would be irrelevant if the Department did not get the critical function of personnel management right. A

global staffing strategy for peacekeeping operations was developed in 2001, comprising five major "building blocks": (a) advance planning; (b) streamlining the recruitment process; (c) expanding the sources of recruitment; (d) rapid deployment; and (e) retention and career management of staff.

34. Regarding advance planning, OIOS found that although progress has been achieved in the updating of generic job profiles for various mission posts, the development of mission modules, templates and succession plans was lagging behind. This could be attributed in part to delays in filling new posts. Succession planning was envisaged to be completed by September 2001 but is now delayed to the end of 2004.

35. The global staffing strategy envisaged streamlining the recruitment process by implementing the Galaxy system, building rosters of qualified candidates for field posts and the delegation of recruitment authority to field missions. The Galaxy system has attracted a large pool of applicants. In response to user recommendations and feedback, Galaxy sorting and searching tools were upgraded and expanded in January 2004. These tools have to be employed effectively to assist the screening of the applicant pool, to eliminate any backlogs of applications and to prevent their reoccurrence.

36. The global staffing strategy recognized that greater efficiency could be achieved by further delegation of recruitment authority to field missions, as had already been done in two missions on a pilot basis. Since then, no further delegation of recruitment authority has taken place because a full evaluation of the pilot project has yet to be undertaken by the Department. Once this evaluation has been conducted, appropriate guidelines should be drafted without further delay and training programmes for civilian staff implemented, as appropriate.

37. The global staffing strategy sought to diversify the sources of field staff recruitment through standing arrangements within the United Nations system and with Member States. Memorandums of understanding were signed with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the United Nations Volunteers and the World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination. OIOS noted that a generic memorandum of understanding with Member States was cleared by the Controller in March 2003 but has yet to be distributed to Member States. OIOS believes that more energetic effort is required to establish standing arrangements for the deployment of civilian specialists through institutional relationships.

38. The global staffing strategy comprised the development of plans for rapid deployment of pre-screened and pre-cleared staff. The Personnel Management and Support Service established a rapid deployment roster consisting of three teams that could be deployed immediately to a new mission for a period of up to 90 days. OIOS found, however, that the availability of many staff members on the roster was indicated as doubtful. Keeping such staff members on the roster vitiates its purpose.

39. One of the reform objectives was the restructuring of the Field Service category and the revision of conditions of service for field personnel. OIOS noted that an interdepartmental working group was constituted in 2001 to review these issues. Currently, these discussions are still ongoing and no timelines have been set to produce recommendations. The only discernible outcome was that, during the current reporting cycle, the performance appraisal system used at Headquarters had

also been implemented in field missions. The consultations between management and the staff resumed recently, after a long hiatus.

V. Policy and capacity development

40. As of mid-2001, basic guidelines, standard operating procedures, handbooks and training programmes were lacking for an average of 50 per cent of recurring peacekeeping activities. Closing this void by creating a comprehensive body of authoritative doctrine, policies and guidance for all peacekeeping activities and establishing a vigorous training programme became a priority in the Department's restructuring. OIOS found that progress in policy development was lagging behind the accomplishments in developing the capacity of peacekeepers.

A. Policy development

41. OIOS noted that a considerable number of policy documents had been developed in all areas of the Department's activity. However, there has been insufficient consistency and clarity in how the established policies of the Department are being developed, promulgated, disseminated and updated. OIOS has difficulty in discerning the hierarchy of existing policy documents, their institutional status and linkages between them.

42. Some of the policies have been developed into publications for field-based personnel and are available on the web page of the Training and Evaluation Service of the Military Division. They are mostly drafts and as such, have no legal standing. It is not clear when the final authoritative documents are expected to be issued. The user is left to decide the currency, relevance and authority of these publications. While some appear to be the standing policies, the fact that they are five to eight years old begs the question whether they remain such. Some appear to be authoritative, although this status could be deduced only by implication. None of these documents, except for one, contains any schedule of envisaged revisions and amendments. OIOS noted that the Training and Evaluation Service had established a project to address the publication management issue.

43. OIOS observed that the lack of established mechanism for institutionalizing a set of norms and principles as an established policy is common for all of the Department's activities. This results in a document being distributed as a draft but with the expectation that it will be treated as an authoritative guidance. In most cases, it is not clear to users in the field where exactly the authority for interpreting the provisions and recommending revisions of a specific guideline or standard operating procedure is vested.

44. OIOS believes that the Department should establish a uniform, consistent mechanism for developing, promulgating, maintaining and amending its policies through authoritative documents. There should be a clear structure of its standing policies, centres of responsibility for developing and promulgating policies in specific subject areas and procedures for amending and keeping such policies current. Draft documents should be circulated for limited time and for discussion purposes only and should never be used as a source of policy guidance. All policy documents should be provided with a uniform nomenclature and symbols, linkages,

cross-references and clear indication of their place in the Department's doctrine hierarchy through identifying superior and subordinate policy publications. Relevant managers should be provided with a clearly written, delegated authority for the approval, promulgation and maintenance of policy documents in their subject areas. A final version should be promulgated and distributed as soon as feasible, with a clearly explained revision procedure. In order to maintain a standardized format and approach to each doctrinal publication, the Department needs to produce an author's brief that would cover structure, style, referencing and footnoting, amendment procedure, distributions lists, abbreviations, glossaries, etc.

B. Lessons learned and best practices

45. The Department's restructuring envisaged collecting and disseminating lessons learned and best practices so that they can be subsequently incorporated in policy and capacity development and operational planning. The Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit is responsible for developing methodology for the extraction of lessons learned and good practices and the establishment of a field lessons-learned network to enable lessons learned and good practices to be captured and exchanged among missions.

46. OIOS noted that the strategic and short-term plans of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit are aimed in the right direction and its goals and priorities are correct. OIOS noted the contribution of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit to developing the pre-mandate commitment authority mechanism.

47. OIOS observed that most managers and staff in the field were not familiar either with lessons learned studies or with procedures for translating them into Department policies or standard operating procedures. The field lessons-learned network is only at the beginning, following the recent appointments of focal points in three missions. Many field managers were frustrated with being asked to formulate lessons learned from their mission experience and then seeing no evidence of them being translated into either policy or practice. Most of the field staff is not aware that the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit web page and database are under development.

48. One of the reasons for these weaknesses is that the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit staffing only recently reached its full strength. OIOS believes that its key problem is to make the Unit's planning realistic, its tasks commensurate with its limited resources, and to focus its efforts on deliverables with demonstrable practical impact. The underlying challenge is to establish promptly an effective mechanism for translating lessons learned into best practices and incorporating them into Department doctrine. This is the objective of the Unit but it will take some time for such mechanism to be fully operational.

C. Training

49. OIOS noted the consistent efforts and considerable accomplishments of the Department in establishing training programmes for all categories of peacekeeping staff. The bulk of the training activity for United Nations civilian employees is conducted by the Civilian Training Section of the Personnel Management and Support Service, and the Training and Evaluation Service of the Military Division,

as well as the training staff of the Civilian Police Division, who conduct training for uniformed personnel of Member States deploying or deployed to peacekeeping missions. OIOS noted that the Civilian Training Section had produced a training and learning policy for civilian staff and issued annually a catalogue containing about 70 courses on a wide range of competencies and skills. The Civilian Training Section web site contains a number of useful e-learning training courses, both online and on CD-ROM. The rapid deployment training course included an exercise for political affairs officers and civil affairs officers to practice planning and decision-making, a drafting course for political affairs officers is being developed and a course to develop the skills of information officers who are likely to be involved in a mission start-up is being prepared in cooperation with the Department of Public Information. A field network of mission training focal points provides feedback on the content and effectiveness of training. Many courses received a very positive feedback from participants.

50. OIOS noted the focused and successful efforts of both the Training and Evaluation Service and the Civilian Police Division in training future peacekeepers through national and regional training centres. Mission training cells are established in most missions. Regarding the Civilian Police Division, the minimal strength of its training staff requires, in OIOS view, wider engagement of and cooperation with external training partners. Responses to OIOS from the field pointed to the need to have integrated civil-military learning exercises.

51. OIOS believes that opportunities should be expanded for political affairs officers from different missions and Headquarters to review their experiences and learn from each other as well as to participate in the training organized by the Department of Political Affairs. Similarly, professional development should be strengthened in other specialized areas such as humanitarian affairs, public information, human rights, HIV/AIDS and child protection, through training, electronic networking and regular congresses.

52. OIOS noted that in October 2003, the Department had prepared a draft training and development strategy with global coverage for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2007, scheduled for review in December 2005. At the time of the OIOS evaluation, the strategy was under consideration by the Training Advisory Group of the Department.

VI. Information and communications technology

53. The Department restructuring envisaged the development and implementation of a comprehensive information technology systems strategy and a comprehensive strategic plan for building and sustaining an information technology capability for the whole Department. OIOS found that currently the Department has neither the said strategy nor a strategic plan. The activities of the Communications and Information Technology Service are guided by the Department's annual programme management plans. In the absence of a formal comprehensive information and communications technology strategy, systems are being introduced in response to pressing operational requirements at Headquarters rather than in line with agreed long-term plans.

54. OIOS recalls that a revised information and communications technology for use by the Secretariat worldwide was presented in November 2002. The

Department's information and communications technology strategy and policies need to be aligned with it. Failure to do so could result in duplication or incompatibility of systems.

55. OIOS noted that the Director of Change Management in his role as the Department's Chief Information Officer is responsible for the creation of the Department's information management strategy and identifying and prioritizing the Department's information management needs. The Director represents the Department on the Secretariat's Information and Communications Technology Board and is also responsible for chairing the information and communications technology committee of the Department, which is to ensure coordination and set priorities for the information technology activities. At the time of the OIOS evaluation, this committee had not been established and the information management strategy has still to be developed. OIOS is concerned about the absence of a well-defined framework and timelines for this exercise, as it impacts negatively on finalizing the information and communications technology strategy.

56. OIOS recalls that the Information and Communications Technology Board is to ensure a coherent and coordinated global usage of information and communications technology. Its Project Review Committee is tasked with applying uniformly the standards decided upon by the Board to information and communications technology initiatives within the Organization and to recommend whether such projects should proceed. Until the information and communications technology committee has been established, the Department will not have a role in the Project Review Committee and therefore will not be in a position to submit any proposals for new systems and other information and communications technology initiatives to this committee.

57. The Secretariat's global information and communications technology strategy identifies the statement of return on investment as the determining factor in prioritizing information and communications technology projects and initiatives and prescribes cost-benefit analyses as a prerequisite for the development of all new information and communications technology systems and related projects. OIOS observed an unstructured approach and a lack of consistent methodologies within the Department for selecting and developing software applications. Cost-benefit analyses have not been carried out nor tangible returns on investment identified. The functional requirements of the field missions were not always adequately analysed, resulting in applications being replaced relatively shortly after introduction. In some cases, the qualitative benefits of new systems are outlined but not translated into financial estimates. OIOS noted that the evaluation of the cost-benefit, efficiency and productivity results of systems implemented in the Department was in progress. OIOS believes, however, that it is essential to conduct such exercises not only in retrospect, but also at the project evaluation stage. OIOS also noted that there was no established practice in the Department of comparing the cost of developing a system in-house with that of purchasing a software package and that the Galileo system was the first case when such an evaluation was done.

58. Regarding the staffing support to the information and communications technology function, OIOS noted the Communications and Information Technology Service management opinion that the current number and skills of information and communications technology staff in both Headquarters and the missions was inadequate. In the absence of individual and time records, OIOS was unable to

determine whether there was indeed a shortage in personnel. In certain instances, one could adopt the industry benchmarks but that method could not be applied to all cases. The monitoring records would enable management to identify delays in specific areas caused by a shortage of staff and to make an informed case for the necessary resources.

59. OIOS looked into arrangements with the International Computing Centre to provide technical support services to the Department in applications development and support, network support and operations support. OIOS observed definite advantages, in terms of both cost and flexibility, in outsourcing certain technical services to the Centre. However, all new software development projects should first be justified on a return-on-investment basis and then compared with the purchase of a package system.

60. OIOS noted that in some projects, the need for upgrades and new releases were not identified at the project planning stage. OIOS is concerned that the criteria for defining the point at which a software development project is complete have not been defined in the past and are not included in the current service delivery agreements with the Centre. There should be clear criteria, together with formal user acceptance, that define the point when a project is complete and the point at which the service by the contractor becomes one of support and maintenance.

VII. Organizational structure and functions

61. The Department's organizational structure and functions have changed considerably compared with those defined by Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2000/9. In some cases, the structure and reporting lines, the alignment of responsibilities and resources still require more clarity. The need to create an effective interface for those substantive and operational areas where the Department does not have primary responsibility or dedicated units remains to be addressed. These and other reform issues fall under the purview of the Director of Change Management. The only staff support to the Director is provided by a P-4 post. OIOS observed that the Director did not supervise the work of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, but the Unit and Director worked together on certain issues. It was envisaged to appoint focal points in peacekeeping operations reporting to the Director. However, at the time of evaluation that remained to be done.

62. The Director of Change Management function is pivotal in restructuring the Department. To make it effective, it is essential to define priorities, goals, milestones and deadlines for the Director's work. Given his vast responsibilities, OIOS was not convinced that staff support to the Director is sufficient. Since lessons learned and best practices are the essential part of management change, OIOS sees merit in establishing direct reporting line from the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit to the Director of Change Management.

63. As discussed above, the Director of Change Management needs to develop an effective mechanism for translating best practices into policies and incorporating them into the Department's training syllabus as soon as they are institutionalized. The option of having a consolidated training entity rather than separate military and civilian ones should be looked into. OIOS believes that the Department should enable the Director of Change Management, supported by the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, to address these issues within a clearly defined timeframe.

64. Concerning Office of Mission Support entities, OIOS observed that for some of them, their responsibilities had been described excessively broadly and that it was difficult to discern their primary functions from those of the services in the field. It was not always clear which were core functions of the units and services that continue indefinitely and which were of finite nature. In the latter case, it was not clear whether any new workload would replace the completed one. OIOS believes that the Director of Change Management should provide leadership in addressing these issues.

VIII. Management culture

65. OIOS observed a number of worthy initiatives in that area that were focused on change from crisis-driven decision-making to tackling longer-term systemic issues and from being reactive to becoming more responsive to the needs of the field. The annual departmental programme management plans, driven by medium-term objectives and supported by business plans of divisions and services, played an important role in this change. The political dimension of mission planning is geared to periodic reporting to the Security Council. The challenge that the Department faces in this regard is to strengthen the linkage between the budgetary benchmarks and the Security Council reporting process. OIOS noted that the Department is well aware of this challenge. What is required is an actionable plan for translating this awareness into practice.

66. OIOS observed with satisfaction that results-based budgeting was promoted with dedication and energy both at Headquarters and in all peacekeeping operations. Thorough training was provided to management and staff on its methodology and implementation. While the practical application of results-based budgeting in the Department suffers from "growing pains" common to the Organization as a whole, it is more advanced, robust and consistent, in OIOS view, than in many other departments of the Secretariat. The linkage of results-based budgeting to the mandate implementation plans of the peacekeeping operations is an important step forward.

67. OIOS observed that the internal planning of the Department was at times excessively ambitious: tasks were not always commensurate with the actual resources available and the deadlines were based on the best-case scenarios of available staffing and skills. The planning sometimes started late and became drawn out well into the ongoing year. The formulations of tasks/outputs often suffered from being vague and open-ended and not having milestones, end results and deadlines defined. More realistic approach to planning would make it more effective.

68. The Department envisaged using divisional business plans as the framework for regular assessment of progress achieved in implementing the restructuring objectives. However, the implementation of the periodic self-evaluations of the implementation of the plans was weak. OIOS noted that the Department's management was cognizant of those shortcomings and intended to undertake a self-evaluation focused on its planning function.

69. Increased attention by the Department to the field is part of new management culture. OIOS noted that the Department obtains feedback from missions on its backstopping in all areas, discusses its results with the heads of missions and

develops action plan on issues of concern. The Department has become more closely involved with missions in deciding how to achieve their strategic goals and developing relevant performance benchmarks. Setting up the system of desk officers and points of contact, conducting frequent videoconferences as well as visits to the field and increased staff exchanges between departmental headquarters and field missions have made a decisive contribution to a positive change in the Department-field collaboration.

70. One of the key factors in enhancing the Department's management culture was advancing its information management and information and communications technology capacity. As discussed above, this has yet to be accomplished. Similarly, one of the key goals of the Programme Management Plans for 2003 was promoting delegation of authority and accountability to field missions. However these, and other goals vital for the success of the Department reform, have not been elaborated into concrete plans of action.

IX. Conclusions

71. **While the Department reform would require more gestation time to produce its full impact, OIOS is of the view that the process is on the right track. The reform has enhanced the Department's capacity to strategize, analyse and tackle complex, multidimensional problems. The rapid deployment capacity and backstopping of field operations have improved.**

72. **In OIOS view, the Department faces four main challenges in enhancing the restructuring: one is to develop a comprehensive, clearly structured and evolving doctrine comprising the totality of its policies and guidelines; another is to operationalize the process of learning lessons and translating them into policies and practice; third is to establish a sound and transparent procedure for adjusting its staffing from peak to routine levels and managing the resultant staff mobility; and, finally, the Department has to exploit fully information management to strengthen its capacity.**

X. Recommendations

73. **The Department of Peacekeeping Operations should examine the possibility of providing the Civilian Police Division with a larger proportion of staff engaged for a term longer than three years. Systematic handover of responsibilities to new arrivals should be ensured by both the Civilian Police Division and the Military Division to guard against loss of institutional memory (para. 6) (SP-03-001-001).***

74. **The Department should revisit the functions and responsibilities of new posts, in particular in the Office of Mission Support, with a view to determining whether their optimal deployment could be in the field (para. 7) (SP-03-001-002).**

---

* The symbols in parentheses in the present section refer to an internal code used by the Office of Internal Oversight Services for recording recommendations.

75. **Based on practical experience, the Department should redesign the integrated mission task forces concept, including the role of the Department in supporting it, to make it operational. There should be a reliable mechanism for apprising, in a timely way, those involved in planning a mission, including its leadership, of applicable lessons learned and best practices and of possible consequences of not applying them properly (paras. 9-12) (SP-03-001-003).**

76. **The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs should develop a viable mechanism for subregional political cooperation between United Nations missions. It should include regular consultations and secondment of staff for specific projects (paras. 13 and 14) (SP-03-001-004).**

77. **The Office of Operations should assess periodically the performance of a mission's political components, including the quality of its products and effectiveness of its activities, indicating clear productivity expectations and requesting desirable improvements and changes in staffing strength and structure, where appropriate (para. 17) (SP-03-001-005).**

78. **The Military Planning Service should issue official revisions to the planning handbook on specific issues, whenever necessary, rather than delaying them until the new version of the handbook is prepared (para. 18) (SP-03-001-006).**

79. **The Department should review the capacity, structure, preparedness and effectiveness of each peacekeeping force no later than one year after its initial deployment and annually thereafter (para. 20) (SP-03-001-007).**

80. **The Department should identify the problems encountered in the field in implementing the COE Manual and issue standard operating procedures to guide the missions and revise the TCC Guidelines. These guidelines should be issued in a timely manner (para. 21) (SP-03-001-008).**

81. **The Department should clearly and realistically define the functions of the Situation Centre in line with its actual resources. It should be determined whether some additional functions that were envisaged earlier could be supported through the reassignment of resources or should be delayed pending the provision of additional resources (para. 22) (SP-03-001-009).**

82. **The Department should further advance the inter-mission flexibilities and establish appropriate mechanisms to support better integration between missions (para. 23) (SP-03-001-010).**

83. **The Department should finalize promptly the organizational streamlining of the Civilian Police Division, including formally defining the responsibilities and reporting lines of section chiefs. The Department should aim at bringing the level of the Division's middle-level management in line with the rest of the Department (paras. 24 and 25) (SP-03-001-011).**

84. **The Division should ensure that its work plans are sound and realistic and have sufficient flexibility for exigencies. Implementation of the plans should be monitored and the efficiency of implementation periodically evaluated (para. 26) (SP-03-001-012).**

85. The Division should develop, jointly with the Office of Operations, the law and order segment of a departmental "generic" exit strategy with a view to preventing law and order vacuum when the United Nations departs. Such a strategy should reflect the build-up in local capacity, take into account all relevant external factors and include contingency measures for potential complications (para. 27) (SP-03-001-013).

86. The Department should conduct a detailed assessment of the materiel and human resources, including the optimal mix of skills and expertise, required for the efficient and cost-effective replenishment, maintenance and deployment of strategic deployment stocks (para. 30) (SP-03-001-014).

87. The Department should recommend to the Controller expanding the authority of missions funded from the regular budget in line with the policy promulgated in July 2002 (para. 31) (SP-03-001-015).

88. The Personnel Management and Support Service should reassess its projects in succession planning and developing recruitment policies and procedures for the field to ensure further delegation of authority. A realistic plan of action should be adopted and monitored along with accountability for timely delivery of the project (paras. 33-36) (SP-03-001-016).

89. The Service should ensure, by regularly updating the roster and actively searching for new candidates, that all staff members on the roster are available for rapid deployment whenever the need arises (para. 38) (SP-03-001-017).

90. The restructuring review of the Field Service category should resume without any further delay, in meaningful consultation with Field Service Staff Union (para. 39) (SP-03-001-018).

91. The Department should establish an effective mechanism for creating and maintaining its body of authoritative policy documents. The Director of Change Management could be charged with providing leadership in this exercise (paras. 41-44) (SP-03-001-019).

92. Under the leadership of the Director of Change Management, a viable, effective mechanism for institutionalizing best practices as policies and operational modalities in all functional areas of the Department should be established. The effectiveness of such mechanism should be periodically assessed. Information technology should be used as an effective tool for this purpose. Best practices should be incorporated into the Department's training in a timely manner (paras. 45-48) (SP-03-001-020).

93. The Department's training strategy should promote an integrated approach to the training of civilian, police and military components, facilitate information exchanges between training practitioners in missions and emphasize incorporating best practices into training. The strategy should also address the capacity development in political affairs and other substantive and operational areas where the Department does not have primary responsibility or dedicated units (paras. 49-51) (SP-03-001-021).

94. The Communications and Information Technology Service should adopt an action plan, with clearly set deadlines and resources, for developing an information and communications technology strategy and a comprehensive strategic plan for the Department and field missions, which should be in line

with the Department's information management strategy and with the global information and communications technology strategy of the Secretariat (paras. 53 and 54) (SP-03-001-022).

95. **The Department should take immediate steps to set up a committee for the information management strategy and policy. A detailed work plan with timelines, benchmarks and resources for developing and implementing the strategy should be prepared expeditiously (para. 55) (SP-03-001-023).**

96. **The Department should take immediate steps to set up its information and communications technology committee as per section 4.4 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2003/17. The user community should be adequately represented on the committee (para. 56) (SP-03-001-024).**

97. **The Department should not develop or commission any new application systems until its information and communications technology strategy is adopted and criteria for systems selection and development, including return on investment, where feasible, are set. The Department's information and communications technology committee, once established, should see to it that no new project is approved without a preliminary evaluation that includes its financial impact and that comparative analysis of purchasing a package system against developing it in-house, or subcontracting it, be made mandatory for all proposed systems (para. 57) (SP-03-001-025).**

98. **The Communications and Information Technology Service should develop individual time records for analysing the adequacy of resources for implementing the planned tasks (para. 58) (SP-03-001-026).**

99. **The Department should apply the same procedures as in recommendation 25 above prior to entering into any new agreements with the International Computing Centre. The Department should update its memorandums of understanding with the Centre to specify that software development tools and procedures should be fully in line with the established Secretariat policies. Agreements regarding software development and systems implementation should clearly define the acceptance criteria and the point of delivery of the system (paras. 59 and 60) (SP-03-001-027).**

100. **The Director of Change Management should lead the review of the Department's organizational structure with a view to formalizing it without delay in a revised Secretary-General's bulletin. The review should define the functions of limited duration and the continuous ones and refine the delineation of responsibilities between the Department and peacekeeping operations and between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Management (paras. 61-64) (SP-03-001-028).**

101. **The Department should make its future business plans more sound and realistic, reflecting staff strength and skills mix, prioritizing tasks, having flexibility for exigencies and realistic deadlines. Implementation of the plans should be monitored and efficiency of implementation periodically evaluated. There should be continuity between subsequent annual plans (paras. 67 and 68) (SP-03-001-029).**

102. **For its priority objectives with most impact on management culture, the Department should develop comprehensive implementation plans with realistic goals, deliverables and deadlines. Their implementation should be continuously monitored (paras. 69 and 70) (SP-03-001-030).**

(*Signed*) Dileep **Nair**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services